

9-19-1863

Thomas L. Evans letter to his sister from Carrollton LA , September 19, 1863

Thomas L. Evans

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Carrollton La.

Sept. 19th 1863

Dear Sister

I received your letter of the 31st to day and was glad to hear from you though you dont say a word about your health but I suppose you are all well. —

I have seen terrible times since I left home but have seldom shed tears so freely as this afternoon when I got your letter & the tribune giving an account of the mass meeting. Thirty of my friends who started from Marysville with us now lay low in the grave, To some of them I have ministered scanty comforts in their sickness & finally closed their eyes in death. and I would bend over the cold form & think another life is given in the cause of liberty & our country & ere I could stop to shed a tear the wants of another would call me away. And another & another thus passed away unswept but not forgotten. I have seen my best friends fall mangled and torn on the battle

field when duty ~~has~~ bid me dash away
with scarcely a word of cheer or a good bye
knowing I could not see them more,

On the the 4th of July I stood on
bluff and ^{shouted & shed tears} ~~saw~~ the white flag wave raised
over the forts at Vicksburg as a reward
for all this. on the same day I stood on
the streets of Vicksburg & saw the stars &
stripes waving over the courthouse & my feeling
were too deep for utterance and I can
fancy now when I look at the stars & stripes
that I see the spirits of those dear departed
ones hovering in its folds & basking in the
breeze around it. The flag of my country
was dear to me before. But now all the
memories of my past life & especially of the past
year cluster around it & how sacred it is Oh!
how I love that old flag now. No you
cannot know one who has not ~~not~~ fought
beneath its folds & seen his comrades fall
around it cannot know how dear it is
to me. Life is dear to me as ever but I am
more ready than ever to lay down my life
rather than see it fall. Do you wonder
then that I shed tears when I know
that flag is in danger from Northern traitors
& read of you rallying to the scene
Save it! Oh! save it! Yes you will
save it. Rally Oh! Rally around

it & in the name of Liberty & of those who are fighting beneath it & of those who have fallen beneath it I swear that it shall be saved. To you your care it is now entrusted rather would I see Vicksburg which cost us so many lives again in possession of the rebels & Washington city taken by them than to know my own State had voted for treason that they had voted down the stars & stripes & voted up the stars & bars which has been so often dragged in the dust by our victorious armies. In other words that they would elect Nat. You are right when you say two more years will soon roll around But remember peace alone can call me from my country's service while I have strength left to strike a blow in her defence. Peace! where is she when will she come to our weeping land. I think I see her slowly cautiously approaching and an overwhelming union majority will induce her to bound forward & reign among us and smile upon us again. But the success of rampant treason in the coming elections will frighten her away then who can tell when she may return. ~~Nearly~~ ^{many} years must pass before she comes so near again.

It cannot will not be that she is frightened ^{always thus}

(H)

You ask me how my Co. will vote, Unless I am much deceived not one of them will vote for Wal. Those you mentioned and perhaps one or two others may not vote at all but I think none will vote for Wal. We say very little about politics here but of course feel deeply interested. But it is growing late & I must quit writing & finish this tomorrow. Good Night.

(5)

Sabbath evening, & the day has been cool enough to be very pleasant & the last two or three evenings have been rather too cool. I have enjoyed the day better than usual. I have heard two excellent sermons one this morning & one this evening by Capt. Coulter of our Reg. Did I ever tell you about him I must do so. He is a young man of brilliant talent a very devoted christian and one of the best men I ever knew. We have been unfortunate with reference to Chaplain in our Reg. We have ~~have~~ not had one with us one fourth of the time. Our first one none of us liked & I doubt if he ever raised a christian emotion in the heart of any one in the Reg. Our present Chaplain I believe to be a fine man but he is at home sick. (his name is Scott). The Capt. has been our stand by from the first & if he were only our Chaplain what a glorious influence he would have. But he is not without his influence as it is. He is a Brethren but we know nothing about sect here.

You want to know what kind a house keeper I am. Come & see. I just got a new house (tent) one of the best I have seen since I came to the army and

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I am "fixed up" all ready to "receive calls" If I happen to be absent please honor me by leaving your card on my table (or under my pillow), I will favor by way of calls from young ladies Thankfully received & promptly returned.

But I know you are "dying to know" & know about my new house & I must tell you for fear it will be more than some time before you have leisure to come & see it. It is ten feet long square with side walls five feet high & a steep roof. The door of course is in the end fronting the street & the window. Well! you may guess where that is. On one side is a lounge about eighteen inches high on which is spread three heavy woolen blankets doubled and over all is spread my comfort which answers the double purpose of bedspread & balance. The floor is covered with a grass carpet which is now quite worn but was nice & new when I came here. In the back part of the ~~text~~ ^{of house} is a pine table two feet by four on which I am writing & which is decorated with a number of books & papers, a good supply of stationery, a small mirror, brushes, a bright candle ^{stick} ~~brightly~~ with candle brightly burning, A pair of scissors Sister Orpha gave me, A green orange bet. all beautifully arranged

in the latest & most approved style of careless confusion. The rest of the tent is occupied by a trunk a chair, & two stools, (for the children or visitors). — So you need not take the pains to bring a chair along for yourself or a stool for Lucy!

I Board at the St. Nicholas Hotel now. i. e. ten of us officers have joined together and hired cooks to furnish our meals. We have a large tent pitched in which we take our meals and which we have christened St. Nicholas. We find it much ^{& cheaper} pleasanter than for each of us to take ^{his} own kitchen with him. This too accounts for my having no kitchen in my new house.

I am sorry to hear of the frost biting your corn & I see by the papers you are not alone in that.

I suppose about this time every body up there is busy cutting corn & seeding.

The health of the Co. now is very good except George Bucklin a young man from Jerhome Township who is very ill.

You will excuse the extreme brevity of this letter for I cannot think of any thing more to write this time except that I am well & contented & happy.

as ever Write soon & after Love to
one and all Good night

Brother

Thomas

Carrollton, La.

Sept. 19th, 1863.

Dear Sister:

I received your letter of the 31st to-day and was glad to hear from you though you don't say a word about your health but I suppose you are all well.

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I have seen my best friends fall mangled and torn on the battle field when duty bid me dash away with scarcely a word of cheer or a goodbye knowing I could not see them more.

On the 4th of July I stood on bluff and shouted and shed tears to see the white flag raised over the forts at Vicksburg as a regard for all this. On the same day, I stood on the streets of Vicksburg and saw the stars and stripes waving over the courthouse and my feelings were too deep for utterance and I fancy now when I look at the stars and stripes, that I see the spirits of those dear departed ones, hovering in it's folds and basking in the breeze around it. The flag of my country was dear to me before but now all the memories of my past life and especially of the past year, cluster around it and how sacred it is. Oh' how I love that old flag now. No, you cannot know - one who has not fought beneath it's folds and seen his comrades fall around it, cannot know how dear it is to me. Life is dear to me as ever but I am more ready than ever to

lay down my life rather than see it fall. Do you wonder then that I shed tears when I know that flag is in danger from the Northern traitors and read of you rallying to the rescue. Save it' Oh' Save it' Yes you will save it. Rally, Oh' Rally around it and in the name of Liberty and of those who are fighting beneath it and of those who have fallen beneath it, swear that it shall be saved. To you, your care it is now entrusted. Rather would I see Vicksburg which cost us so many lives again in possession of the rebels and Washington city taken by them than to know my own state had voted for treason - that they had voted down the stars and stripes and voted up the stars and bars which has been so often dragged in the dust by our victorious armies. In their words than that, they would elect Val. You are right when you say two more years will soon roll around but remember peace alone can call me from my countries service while I have strength left to strike a blow in her defense. Peace' where is she, when will she come to our weeping land. I think I see her slowly, cautiously approaching and an overwhelming union majority will induce her to bound forward and reign among us and smile upon us again but the success of rampant treason in the coming elections, will frighten her away then who can tell when she may return? Nay, years may pass before she comes so near again.

It cannot, will not be that she is frightened away this. You ask me how my Co. will vote. Unless I am much deceived, not one of them will vote for Val. Those you mentioned and perhaps one or two others may not vote at all but I think none will vote for Val. We say very little about politics here but of course feel deeply interested but it is growing late and I must quit writing and finish this to-morrow. Good night.

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Brother,

Thomas.